

E.) REMARKS

This Response is filed in response to the Office Action dated July 27, 2004. A supplemental Appeal Brief is filed concurrently with this Response, incorporating the amendments to the claims contained in this Response.

Upon entry of this Response, claims 2-27 will be pending in the Application. Claim 1 is canceled.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner indicated that in the Appeal Brief filed on April 19, 2004, the status of claim 1 and claims depending from claim 1 is unclear. Applicant conferenced by telephone on July 29, 2004 regarding the response to be contained in the Office Action. Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended during the telephone conference.

In response thereto, claim 1 is canceled, and claim 2 is rewritten in independent form, containing all the limitations contained in independent claim 1. In addition, the claims depending from claim 1 have been amended to depend from independent claim 2. Further, other informalities have also been incorporated. Entry of this amendment is requested to clarify the claims for purposed of appeal.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Application and the remarks contained in the concurrently submitted supplemental Appeal Brief, and withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections. As a result of the amendments and remarks presented herein and in the supplemental Appeal Brief, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-27 are not anticipated by nor rendered obvious by Nagaraj et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,723,078), Skelly et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,419,971) or their combination and thus, are in condition for allowance. As the claims are not anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of the applied art, Applicant requests allowance of claims 2-27 in a timely manner. If the Examiner believes that prosecution of this Application could be expedited by a telephone conference, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicant.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1059.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: August 23, 2004